

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

SAJ-01 IO-11 ACDA-07 /079 W

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R 061632Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7890

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: FRG "FOURTH PARTY" HOLDS NATIONAL CONGRESS

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FOURTH PARTY (AVP) IS ATTEMPTING TO BUILD A NATIONAL PARTY WITH GOALS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE CSU. THE APRIL 4 AVP NATIONAL CONGRESS GAVE THE PARTY PUBLICITY, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE AVP WILL OBTAIN THE FIVE PERCENT NECESSARY FOR REPRESENTATION IN THE BUNDESTAG. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

1. THE FOURTH PARTY ACTION GROUP (AKTIONSGEMEINSCHAFT VIERTE PARTEI, AVP) IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF ATTEMPTS TO CAPITALIZE ON VOTER INTEREST TO THE RIGHT OF THE CDU OUTSIDE BAVARIA. FOUNDED IN OCTOBER, 1975, THE AVP HAS ATTEMPTED TO GAIN RECOGNITION AS A NATIONAL CSU BY SUPPORTING CSU POLICIES AND PROFESSING ALLEGIANCE

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TO FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS. STRAUSS, HOWEVER, ON NOVEMBER

17, 1975, REAFFIRMED HIS SUPPORT TO THE CDU/CSU COALITION IN A LETTER TO HELMUT KOHL. THE LETTER STRESSED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO SENSE IN A CSU GERMANY-WIDE CAMPAIGN SINCE THE CDU AND THE CSU SUPPORT THE SAME POLICIES. DENIED OVERT CSU SUPPORT, THE AVP HAS NONETHELESS DECIDED TO CAMPAIGN ON ITS OWN IN THE OCTOBER 3 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS.

2. IN THE MONTHS PRECEDING THE FIRST AVP NATIONAL CONGRESS, PARTY ORGANIZATIONS WERE FOUNDED THROUGHOUT THE FRG. THERE IS TO DATE NO OFFICIAL AVP ORGANIZATION IN WEST BERLIN WHERE A FOURTH PARTY ALREADY EXISTS, "BUND FREIES DEUTSCHLAND." DIETRICH BAHNER, HAN AUGSBURG SHOE FACTORY OWNER AND FORMER FDP AND DEUTSCHE UNION MEMBER, HAS GUIDED THE AVP FROM ITS INCEPTION DRAWING ON THE SUPPORT OF OTHER FOURTH PARTY ENTHUSIASTS. KURT MEYER, BAHNER'S CHIEF ASSISTANT AND NORTH RHINE WESTPHALIA AVP LEADER, WAS A CO-FOUNDER OF THE DEUTSCHE UNION AND GUENTHER LEYK, BAVARIAN AVP CHAIRMAN, WAS AN ORGANIZER OF THE NOW-DEFUNCT REPUBLICAN PARTY. WITH THE HELP OF THESE AND OTHER VETERAN ORGANIZERS, BAHNER HAS BUILT UP A PARTY THAT NOW CLAIMS 3000 MEMBERS. BAHNER HAS ALSO APPARENTLY PROVIDED AT LEAST PART OF THE AVP OPERATING FUNDS, CONTRIBUTING CONSIDERABLE SUMS OF HIS SHOE BUSINESS MONEY TO THE EFFORT.

3. THE NATIONAL CONGRESS, HELD IN BONN ON APRIL 4, WAS A KALEIDOSCOPIC AFFAIR WHICH, IN BALANCE, WAS A PLUS FOR BAHNER AND THE AVP. BAHNER'S MAIN ADDRESS TO THE 240 DELEGATES OFFERED THE AVP AS A COALITION PARTNER TO THE CDU/CSU AND ATTACKED THE "LEFTIST FDP/SPD BLOC." WITHOUT THE AVP, BAHNER CLAIMED, THE CDU/CSU CANNOT HOPE TO ACHIEVE A MAJORITY. BAHNER RECEIVED WARM RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS SUPPORTING WEST BERLIN AND AGAINST ALLOWING RADICALS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

4. BAHNER CHARACTERIZED USG STATEMENTS CONCERNING COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS AS TOO WEAK. BAHNER WOULD NOT MERELY RE-EXAMINE THE STATUS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUCH NATO MEMBERS BUT RATHER WOULD EXPEL THEM. AS BAHNER FINISHED HIS ADDRESS, THE CROWD SPONTANEOUSLY BEGAN SINGING THE GERMAN NATIONAL ANTHEM. SOME DELEGATES SANG THE OFFICIAL THIRD VERSE, WHILE OTHERS SANG THE POLITICALLY-CHARGED FIRST VERSE. THE AVP LEADERSHIP LATER CLAIMED THAT ONLY NPD MEMBERS IN THE HALL HAD USED THE FIRST VERSE AND CAREFULLY DISTANCED THE AVP FROM ANY IDENTIFICATION WITH THE NPD. AS THIS OUTBREAK SUB-

SIDED, A MEMBER OF THE BERLIN DELEGATION, WHICH WAS CONSPICUOUS FOR A SIGN WHICH READ "GERMANY'S CAPITAL REMAINS BERLIN," DEMANDED A CHANCE TO SPEAK TO THE CONVENTION. THE BERLIN DELEGATION WAS NOT "OFFICIAL" AND ITS NONRECOGNITION CAUSED A SPLIT IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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5. AT THE END OF THE DAY BAHNER WAS OVERWHELMINGLY ELECTED NATIONAL PARTY CHAIRMAN. PRESS COVERAGE WAS EXTENSIVE; SEVERAL MAJOR EUROPEAN TELEVISION NETWORKS WERE REPRESENTED AS WELL AS NUMEROUS IMPORTANT NEWSPAPERS. THE NEXT AVP CONGRESS WAS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 17 IN FRANKFURT, TO DISCUSS ELECTION STRATEGY.

PROSPECTS

6. THE QUESTION REMAINS WHETHER THE AVP WILL GAIN ENOUGH VOTES TO SURMOUNT THE FIVE PERCENT HURDLE OR IF NOT, WHETHER THE VOTES FOR THE AVP WILL HURT CDU/CSU CHANCES TO OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS. A JANUARY EMNID INSTITUTE OPINION POLL GAVE THE AVP "DEFINITELY" ONLY ONE PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRG. MANY VOTERS WERE REPORTED TO BE UNDECIDED, HOWEVER, DUE TO THEIR LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH THE AVP. AT THE MOMENT IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE AVP WILL RECEIVE FIVE PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL VOTE IN THE BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS.

7. A NATIONAL CSU OPENLY SUPPORTED BY FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS MIGHT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN FIVE PERCENT EVEN OUTSIDE BAVARIA. HOWEVER, THE CSU CANNOT CAMPAIGN NATIONALLY WITHOUT INCURRING CDU WRATH AND POSSIBLY CDU COMPETITION IN BAVARIA AT THE NEXT LANDTAG ELECTION, WHICH COULD DENY THE CSU AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY THERE. THE POSSIBILITY ALSO EXISTS THAT THE AVP WILL DRAW VOTES FROM THE RIGHT WINGS OF THE SPD AND FDP. BUT THE AVP IS MORE LIKELY TO DRAW VOTES FROM THE CDU/CSU THAN FROM THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL RANKS.
HILLENBRAND

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